



## Margaret Newell

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### Margaret Newell Ohio State



#### "Race Frontiers: Indian Slavery in Colonial New England"

**Monday, February 27, 2005  
12:00 p.m.  
Mershon Center  
Room 120**



*This lecture is open to the public. Lunch will be served to invited students and faculty who RSVP to [Viki Jones](#), no later than Thursday, February 23, 2005.*

My current book project, "Race Frontiers: Indian Slavery in Colonial New England," examines the enslavement of Native Americans by Anglo-American settlers in New England during the colonial and Revolutionary eras. Historians of slavery and the "construction of race" in America — the emergence of theories of racial inferiority and superiority and the translation of racialized categories into law and other institutions — generally focus on the encounter between Europeans and Africans. Yet, Native Americans constituted the vast majority of those enslaved by colonial regimes in the Americas prior to 1700, and Indians played a critical role in the creation of local economies as well as in the evolution of colonial society.

Colonial New England was no exception to this rule. Its armies, courts and magistrates bound thousands of Indian men, women and children into servitude and slavery. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, most Indian slaves were war captives and refugees. Following their defeat in King Philip's War, however, the Indians of southern New England became colonial subjects, and new laws prohibited enslaving them. Yet, slavery continued in different forms in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notably the sentencing of Native Americans to involuntary servitude for debt or crime, and the forcible "apprenticeship" of children. At the same time, the colonists created a "race frontier" that stripped unfree people of color of rights enjoyed by their white counterparts. The experiences of these Indian slaves and involuntary servants, and the attitudes of the Euramericans who enslaved them, shed light on both the legal evolution of New World chattel slavery and the emerging definitions of race in Early America.

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**Margaret Newell** received her A.B. from Brown University and her Ph.D. in Early American History from the University of Virginia. Currently, she is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at Ohio State, where she teaches courses on the American Revolution, Colonial America and Native American History. She is presently completing a book entitled "Race Frontiers: Indian Slavery in Colonial New England," which explores the enslavement of Native Americans by English settlers in the northeastern colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Professor Newell's book also examines the ways in which Indian slavery and involuntary servitude intertwined with the expansion of African slavery and with the development of racial ideas and identities in early America. She outlined some of these themes in a recent article, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England, 1670-1730," in Colin Calloway and Neal Salisbury, eds., *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience* (Boston, 2003). She has published numerous works on economic history as well, including her 1998 book, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England*. Her research has received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies.